



**STANLEY JOE EDMONDS**  
BA, BSc, MSc, PhD, Dip Ed.  
Photograph courtesy of the SA Museum

## OBITUARY

**STANLEY JOE EDMONDS, BA, BSc, MSc, PhD, Dip Ed.**

13.ii.1909 - 16.vii.1995.

President of the Royal Society of South Australia Inc. 1965

Stan Edmonds died quietly in his sleep on 16 July 1995 aged 86. He is sadly missed by his many friends from all walks of life who miss his sense of humour, joie de vivre and scholarship.

His working life fell roughly into three periods each of about twenty years' duration. He was a school teacher at Adelaide High School from 1931 to 1952, he then taught and conducted research in the Zoology Department of the University of Adelaide from 1952 to 1974 and finally, as an Honorary Associate at the South Australian Museum, he continued his research from 1972 to 1995.

Stanley Joe Edmonds was born in Adelaide (South Australia) on 13 February, 1909. He attended the Thebarton Primary School from 1915-1922 and the Woodville District High School from 1923-1925, obtaining his Intermediate Certificate in 1924 and his Leaving Certificate the following year. In 1926 he joined the Lands and Survey Department of the South Australian Public Service with the intention of becoming a surveyor. During this time he studied science part-time as a private student at the University of Adelaide doing Mathematics I during the day and Chemistry I and Physics I at night.

In 1927 he joined the Education Department and entered the Adelaide Teachers College. He graduated in 1929 with a BSc majoring in Inorganic and Organic Chemistry and began his teaching career in 1930, teaching for six months at Woodville High School.

In 1931 he began his impressive twenty-year association with Adelaide High School, ultimately becoming a Special Senior Master in Chemistry and General Science and teaching Leaving Honours Chemistry from 1945 to 1951. During this time, he obtained three further degrees - a BA in 1935 in which he majored in Latin and English, a First Class Honours in Zoology in 1945 (after completing Zoology I, II and III in 1941, 1943 and 1944 respectively) and an MSc in 1947.

However, it was his broad interests and sense of humour combined with his great teaching ability that endeared him to his students. He was interested in sport, particularly tennis and hockey at which he excelled, acting, singing and the arts.

During his last few years at Adelaide High School Stan became interested in Zoological research and began a series of collaborative studies with T. Harvey Johnston, the Foundation Professor of Zoology at Adelaide University and a noted Parasitologist. These studies on Australian Acanthocephala (spiny-headed worms parasitic in the alimentary canals of various fish, birds and mammals) were first published in 1947 and continued for several years after Professor Johnston's death in 1951. During this period Stan widened his interests to include free-living marine organisms and in 1948 had a paper published on "The common species of animals and their distribution on an intertidal platform at Pennington Bay, Kangaroo Island". These mounting interests in Zoology led in 1952 to his resignation from the Education Department to take up an appointment as a lecturer in the Zoology Department, University of Adelaide under the newly-appointed Professor of Zoology, W. P. Rogers, an authority on the physiology and biochemistry of parasitic nematodes.

It was at this time that I had the pleasure of meeting Stan as I had been appointed to the Zoology Department as a Demonstrator earlier that year. One always associated him with laughter or at least a smile. His miming of sewing his fingers together and then threading the needle through various parts of his arm so that the whole could be moved mechanically by pulling on the thread, was always demanded of him at departmental parties and was always accompanied by gasps of horror from the faint-hearted and much amusement from the initiated.

Later, in his chapter on Zoology in "Ideas and Endeavours. The Natural Sciences in South Australia" Stan described what a busy time his early years in the Zoology Department had been, as student numbers were increasing rapidly and Rogers was building the Zoology Department. Needless to say, in this chapter, Stan gave himself scarcely any mention.

In addition to broadening his taxonomic interests, describing new species of Australian marine invertebrates, notably sipunculans and echinurans, Stan began to conduct a range of physiological and biochemical experiments on them. These physiological experiments were extended to the parasitic acantho-

cephalans and to the species *Moniliformis dubius* in particular. This species was maintained in the laboratory in cockroaches, the intermediate host, and rats, the primary host. The distinctive rustle and odour of Stan's experimental cockroaches, as one entered the constant temperature room in which they were housed, are sounds and smells not easily forgotten! The nutrition and egg laying of these animals were studied and reported upon and, together with B. R. Dixon, a paper was published in *Nature* on the uptake of small particles through the body wall of *M. dubius*.

Around this time Stan collaborated with H. B. S. Womersley in what was the first significant paper on the intertidal ecology of South Australia. It was also the first paper published on this topic in Australia that dealt in equal detail with both flora and fauna. Furthermore, it dealt with the relatively sheltered coastline of South Australia which, with its gulfs and bays and Kangaroo Island, differed from the more exposed coastline of the Eastern States. In the light of their work Womersley and Edmonds were able to supply evidence, previously unavailable, for the biogeographical nomenclature of the southern Australian coastline.

In addition to his researches on intertidal ecology, Stan also worked with Marian Specht on ecological studies of heathland in the Keith region of South Australia. This work involved monthly visits over a period of three years between 1952 and 1954 and resulted in the accumulation of a vast amount of information that permitted judgements to be made on the faunal rhythms of heathland in South Australia.

In 1958 Stan's researches on sipunculans resulted in his being awarded a PhD.

Stan Edmonds' work on the Public Examinations Board, a member from 1960 to 1974, Chief Examiner in Biology for ten years and deputy Chairman from 1973-1974, was a measure of the regard in which his teaching experience was held.

Stan was to continue to undertake research on the sipunculans and the somewhat similar echiurans for many more years. In 1972 he co-authored a book with his late friend Dr A. C. Stephen of the Edinburgh Museum entitled "The Phyla Sipuncula and Echiura".

At the time of Dr Stephen's death, much remained to be done and it was recognized that Stan was the only person who had the scholarship and energy to complete this task. His share of this important contribution to marine studies was a large one, bringing information up to date and checking descriptions, records and translations with original specimens and data. He arranged species into genera, provided keys for identification and was alone responsible for the sixty full page illustrations. Some 320 species of sipunculans and 130 species of echiurans had been described at the time this 527 page book was published by the Trustees of the British Museum (Natural History) London. It was the first systematic monograph of the two phyla to be published this century and is likely to remain the standard reference work for many years to come.

Stan retired from the University of Adelaide in 1974, having been made a Reader in Zoology in 1973. He became an Honorary Associate of the South Australian Museum and over the next twenty years published a further thirty papers including several chapters in books. He was a strong supporter of the Royal Society of South Australia Inc., occupying the positions of Council member, Secretary, Vice President and becoming President in 1965. In 1982 he was awarded the Society's Sir Joseph Verco Medal for his distinguished scientific researches.

In conclusion I quote from C. M. Ward MA, a Latin teacher and scholar of high repute and, at the time, Acting Principal of Adelaide High School who wrote on 17 September, 1948 the following words. "Mr Edmonds has a lively, genial personality, a good sense of humour and a resourceful cultured mind. He is of strong, independent character but always friendly and unassuming. His honesty and integrity are unquestioned". A most fitting tribute to a much liked and respected personality who maintained these traits throughout his life.

Stan Edmonds is survived by his wife Barbara (née Ey) and a daughter Elizabeth.

ALAN F. BIRD

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